

MacUser

REVIEWS

WORD PROCESSING

Grammatik Mac and Correct Grammar

Used prudently, either of these powerful proofreading programs can improve your prose.

Writing is a difficult art, and writers have traditionally turned to editors and proofreaders to tend to the mechanics of language so they could concentrate more on content. Spelling checkers can obviously proofread for spelling, but editing and much of the rest of proofreading are complex, judgment-laden arts consisting of much more than merely catching spelling errors.

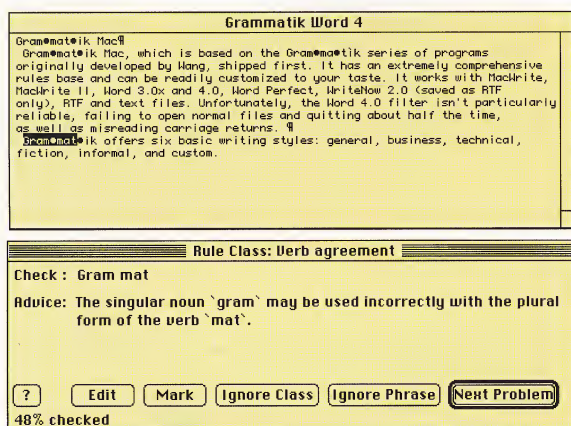
There have always been programs that claimed an ability to edit and proofread. Those for the Mac have generally been awful, making suggestions based on a limited rule set or knowledge base. If that wasn't restrictive enough, these early efforts could only offer suggestions, without being able to print them out. Inserting the corrections and modifications into your work was a separate manual task.

Two new programs buck this tradition, offering reasonable editing, proofing, and correcting. Both are low in cost and fairly quick and easy to use.



GRAMMATIK MAC Grammatik Mac, which is based on the Grammatik series of programs originally developed by Wang, shipped first. It has an extremely comprehensive base and can be

readily customized. It works with MacWrite, MacWrite II, Word 3 and 4, WordPerfect 1.0.3, WriteNow 2.0 (saved as RTF only), RTF, and text files. Unfortunately, the Word 4 filter isn't particularly reliable, failing to open normal files



Grammatik Mac is a powerful proofreader, but it's plagued by a Word 4 filter that doesn't work reliably and a clunky interface. As you can see, it has rules for just about everything.

and quitting out of the application about half the time, as well as misreading carriage returns.

Grammatik Mac offers six basic writing styles: general, business, technical, fiction, informal, and custom. Each loads a slightly different rule set, and you should try each style, using the same type of document to find out which works best for you. (I find general is best for me for all documents, including both the most formal and the most technical.) You can customize rules to your liking — but be

prepared for some very busy dialog boxes when you set your rules.

The overall interface is clumsy and poorly thought out. For example, the Open and Save buttons are incredibly ugly and reminiscent of PCs. Save works awkwardly. If you don't click on it, it will automatically save the corrected file with the same name as the original. It does preserve the original file by adding the suffix •Old to the filename, but it's easy to get confused.

Grammatik Mac checks nearly everything and has rules for virtually anything. For my taste, it overdoes things, and if I accepted all its suggestions, my results would be overly dull and dry. It might be correct grammar, but it wouldn't be good writing. The solution is to take the time to heavily customize your copy of Grammatik Mac. Grammatik Mac comes with a complete manual and a separate book of writing advice.

CORRECT GRAMMAR Correct Grammar's rule set and checking engine are based on a system developed by Houghton Mifflin. Its rule base isn't as detailed as Grammatik's, but it is more flexible, putting it a bit more in tune with today's grammar. A nice touch is the option to automatically create a backup copy of the original file before any checking starts. That's an excellent safeguard.

Correct Grammar works with MacWrite; MacWrite II; Word 1.5, 3, and 4; WordPerfect 1.0.3; WriteNow 2; QuickLetter; Acta; Acta Advantage; AppleLink; and text files. It has a nice interface, and use is intuitive. Some users

Get Info

Correct Grammar

★★★★½

Published by: Lifetree Software,
33 New Montgomery St., Suite
1260, San Francisco, CA 94105;
(415) 541-7864.

Version: 1.0.

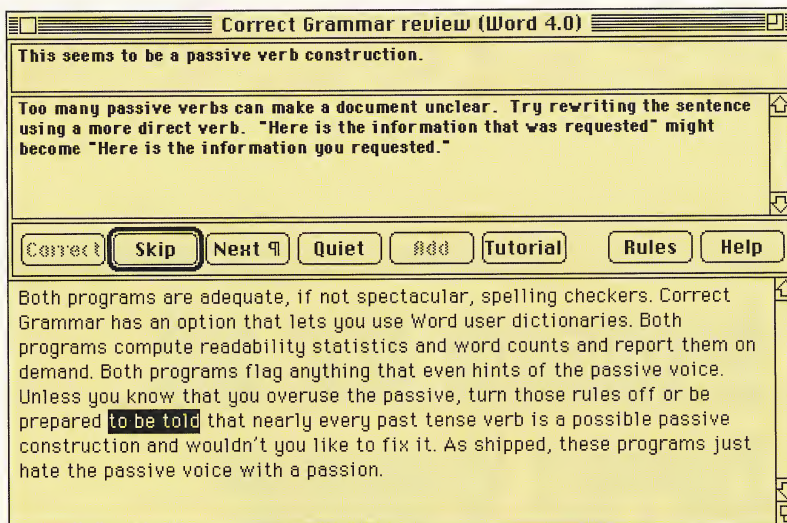
List Price: \$79.

may find the small size of the type in the context window a drawback; neither the type size nor typeface can be modified.

Most of your actions are controlled from a well-designed set of buttons that runs across the middle of the correction area. With the Quiet button, you can turn off a particular rule, permanently or temporarily. This feature makes customizing your copy of Correct Grammar exceptionally easy. That's a relief, because the other place where you customize Correct Grammar is in the Rule Classes dialog box, one of the busiest, most complex dialog boxes I've ever seen.

Correct Grammar is a bit better at checking for readability than is Grammatik Mac. That's because you can more finely tune its readability-checking tests. You'll need to refer to the manual, however, to find out exactly what each element in the tuning dialog box does. The manual is good although not quite equal to the Grammatik Mac manual.

Both programs are adequate, if not spectacular, spelling checkers. Correct Grammar has an option that lets you employ Word user dictionaries. Both programs compute readability statistics and word counts and report them on demand. And both programs hate the passive voice (Strunk and White fans, rejoice). Unless you know that you overuse the passive, turn those rules off, or else prepare yourself for being told that nearly every past-tense verb is a possible



Correct Grammar isn't as powerful as Grammatik Mac, but it's easier to use and is more in line with today's grammar. You control most of your actions from the row of buttons you see here.

passive construction. Correct Grammar also includes a book on sound writing.

THE BOTTOM LINE If you think you can benefit from a proofreading program, get Correct Grammar unless you have a specific reason for doing otherwise. It has fewer rules and features than Grammatik Mac but is more than adequate for most writers. It's also better behaved and has a much better interface. Correct Grammar is much easier to use than Grammatik Mac, requiring less clicking and mousing

to reach the same ends, and it's also far less likely to do things that you neither want nor need done.

And keep in mind that these programs are here to make suggestions about your work, not write your material for you. If you use them carefully, your writing may improve. If you follow them blindly, your writing will almost certainly suffer. Though rules can be helpful, they're also meant to be broken.

— Steven Bobker

System Requirements. Macintosh with 1 MB of RAM and hard disk, System 4.2 or higher. Compatible with Microsoft Word 3, 4; MacWrite; MacWrite II; WordPerfect; WriteNow 2.0; Microsoft Works; Microsoft Write; QuickLetter; Acta Advantage; and any text-only document.

Also available for the PC.


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Grammar**™

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Or call toll-free:

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Get high-quality text and graphics without a high-cost printer.

Freedom of Press® Light provides your ordinary printer with PostScript® language compatibility. Now, you can use applications that produce high-quality PostScript language output without buying a high-cost PostScript language printer.

It's easy-to-use.

Applications like Aldus Freehand®, Aldus PageMaker®, Quark XPress®, and Adobe Illustrator® work well with Freedom of Press Light. Use your application to produce text and graphics files in the PostScript language.

Freedom of Press Light converts your PostScript language files into bit-mapped images that your printer can understand. Your printer works at its highest resolution, so you get the high-quality output that's possible with the PostScript language.

It's font-friendly.

Freedom of Press Light offers support for Adobe Type 1 fonts with hints and ATM and comes with 17 fonts equivalent to those found on the Apple LaserWriter® IINT. These fonts include Symbol, the Courier family, the Times family, and a font family compatible with Linotype's Helvetica® and Helvetica Narrow. If you want more fonts, an optional 18-font upgrade package is available. All fonts can be scaled and rotated to arbitrary point sizes and angles.

\$98
SUGGESTED
RETAIL PRICE



Macintosh System Requirements

- Macintosh Plus, SE, SE-30, II, IIcx, IIx, IIfx, portable, IIsi, IIc, and Classic
- 2 megabytes of memory
- 800K floppy disk drive
- 2.5 megabytes of hard disk space

Q. How many of these printers are PostScript® language compatible?

A. Every one of them is with Freedom of Press Light.

AMT Accel 500
Apple ImageWriter II,
LaserWriter IISC
Canon BJ-130, BJ-130e
LBP series
Citizen GSX140
Diconix 150, 150 Plus
Epson AP series,
DFX series, EPL series,
EPL series, FX series,
L series, LQ series,
LX series, T series
Fujitsu DL series, DL Color,
Laser
GCC PLP II, others
Howtek Pixelmaster
Hewlett Packard Desk Jet,
Desk Jet Plus,
Deskwriter,
Laser Jet II, IIP, IID
LaserJet-2000, LaserJet-III,

HP Paint Jet, PaintJet XL,
PaintWriter
IBM 4019 LaserPrinter,
Pro Printer X24
Quick Writer,
Quiet Writer
Kyocera F Series
NEC P5, P5 Color, P5200
P5300, P2200, P9XL
Olivetti PG-108
Panasonic KX series
PCL Compatibles
PCX File Format
Qume CrystalPrint
Sharp JX 730
Siemens PT-90, PT 885
Tektronix Colorquick
Toshiba P351SX
... and most
QuickDraw® printers

Laser printers require at least 1 MB of memory in printer for full page imaging.

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